

# New Professional Guidelines in Hungary

In Hungary, the constantly renewed disaster management legislation demanded new professional guidelines for disaster management and voluntary rescue organizations. (Photos by Ministry of Interior, National Directorate General for Disaster Management–Hungary.)



# The national classification system for cave/rope rescuers in Hungary

BY PÉTER JACKOVICS

**I**n Hungary, the constantly renewed disaster management legislation demanded new professional guidelines for disaster management and voluntary rescue organizations because the regulation of this topic had not yet taken place.

Pursuant to the stipulations in Sections 57-65 of Government Decree No. 234/2011 (XI.10.) (hereinafter: Decree) on the implementation of Act CXXXVIII of 2011 on the amendment of the Act on Disaster Management and of other Acts in relation, for the sake of the national classification of voluntary rescue organizations operating in Hungary and their uniform involvement in rescue operations, Instruction No. 13/2013 of NDGDM on the basic requirements of the national classification system lays the foundation for basic definitions of the national classification system and, at the same time, regulates the functioning of the classification system.

## ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The legal regulation is relevant to the national disaster management organization, to the Budapest and county disaster management directorates (regional bodies); however, it contains the minimum professional requirements imposed on Hungarian voluntary rescue organizations involved in rescue duties by the national classification system as well. They are laid down in the so-called Organizational and Operational Guidelines, developed by the National Directorate General for Disaster Management (NDGDM).

NDGDM has set as an aim to issue the Organizational and Operational Guidelines for voluntary rescue organizations and voluntary regional civil protection organizations to be involved in rescue, in the system of disaster management, specially equipped and trained. The basic function of the Organizational and Operational Guidelines is to formulate basic professional requirements as recommendations for voluntary rescue organizations and voluntary regional civil protection organizations to be involved in rescue. NDGDM intends to work together with organizations in the future and wishes to involve them in rescue and damage control (disaster response), which meet these minimum professional requirements and, based on them, classify themselves. The minimum scope of professional requirements for these organizations is regulated in the seven branches of rescue in the form of the Organizational and Operational Guidelines:

1. Basic water damage prevention activity.
2. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), technical rescue capacities (recommended minimum personnel for a heavy team is 55 persons, for medium category 38 persons, a light category 12 persons).
3. Search dog activity.



Above: NDGDM organizes test classification exercises, systems integration exercises, and the national classification exercises in half-yearly cycles. Below: The working group of special rescuers using high-angle or low-angle rescue techniques and teams specialized for confined space rescue met at NDGDM to elaborate and develop the basic professional criteria for the branch.



4. Scuba diving activity.
5. Management, logistics.
6. Rope technique (alpine, cave) rescue.
7. Water rescue capacities.

## BACKGROUND MATERIAL PORTFOLIO

To obtain classification, a voluntary rescue organization submits a request to be registered by the competent regional disaster management body. The classification of a rescue organization for the first time takes place in the framework of a systems integration exercise concerning which the rescue organization should submit an introductory professional background material, a portfolio.

The portfolio includes the legal basis and requirements, the national classification system for voluntary rescue organizations

that intend to obtain national classification. They must meet the criteria laid down in the sections of the legislation regulating the technical and engineering requirements.

The portfolio should include the following:

- The data on the rescue organization: name, seat, mission, time of establishment.
- Structure of the team: organizational chart and its composition in a table and the criteria of team member selection.
- The operation and introduction of the units and the list of deployments per unit.
- The system of training, exercises, and drills.
- The mobilization and the logistics support of the team.
- The system of registering, repair, and maintenance of equipment.
- The method of healthcare and medical support.

The following items should be attached to the portfolio:

1. Recommendation of the regional body of NDGDM.
2. Operational procedures and operation of the team.
3. The documents certifying the level of training.
4. The list of team members with assignments and photos.
5. List of equipment (cargoes and full list).
6. The availability of life and accident insurance policies, their certified copies.
7. Documents certifying the health status (e.g., health records of members, inoculation certificates of search dogs).

## NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION EXERCISE

Besides the portfolio, the team has to prepare a systems integration exercise plan, which should be submitted to NDGDM for

## Basic requirements for the national classification of rope rescue units.

Establishment			
1. Establishment of a rope rescue organization/unit	Y/N	4. Basic criteria concerning the members of the rope rescue organization/unit	Y/N
1.1. According to the county's/Budapest's vulnerability, the ability and capacity of the rescue team complement and strengthen the local, county, and national disaster management system.		4.1. The members of the organization/unit have basic medical aptitude examination to work in elevated places and participate in periodic medical screening.	
1.2. The organization/unit accepts the basic principle that it is a common interest that professionally trained, certified persons and units should be involved in rescue in Hungary.		5. Capabilities	Y/N
2. General expectations, basic requirements	Y/N	5.1. The organization/unit is capable of properly cooperating with other rescue units and organizations.	
2.1. Organization with independent legal entity		5.2. The organization/unit is capable of splitting its personnel and working together with another rescue team or unit.	
2.1.1. It has judicial/court registration documents.		5.3. The organization/unit is capable of integrating its personnel and assets during deployment.	
2.1.2. The organization has at least 1 year of registration in Hungary.		5.4. The organization/unit conducts exercise together with the disaster management or other rescue units.	
2.2. Basic general expectations, requirements—if it is established as a unit of a regional rescue organization	Y/N	5.5. The organization/unit is capable of low-angle, high-angle, and confined space (building) rescue as an organization and of securing transportation with rope technique equipment.	
2.2.1. It has documents on the establishment of the unit.		6. Training	Y/N
2.2.2. The unit has procedures on the mobilization of members and rescue equipment and on their involvement in rescue.		6.1. The members of the organization/unit are trained and have the documentation required to carry out rescue tasks, which certify that they have acquired the knowledge required to perform low-angle, high-angle, and confined space rescue.	
2.2.3. The point of contact of the organization/unit has experience in the professional field of rope rescue.		7. Communication and IT	Y/N
2.3. General expectations and requirements	Y/N	7.1 The organization/unit is capable of communicating:	
2.3.1. The tools and equipment are stored in a deployable condition.		7.1.1 Internally (communication within the team between members).	
2.3.2. The tools and equipment have classification.		7.1.2 Externally (incident site communication).	
2.3.3. A vehicle suitable for the transportation of equipment by road is available.		7.2. The organization/unit is capable of using GPS and mapping technology.	
2.3.4. Members of the organization/unit undertake on a voluntary basis to carry out tasks recorded in the function of the rope rescue organization/unit.		8. Documents	Y/N
2.3.5. The organization/unit undertakes the tasks recorded in the cooperation agreement.		8.1 The members of the organization/unit have the following personal documents:	
2.3.6. The organization/unit undertakes to participate in the classification in Hungary, which is to be repeated every 5 years before the expert(s) appointed by NDGDM.		8.1.1. Valid identity card or passport.	
2.3.7. The organization/unit accepts administrative supervision by NDGDM and its regional bodies.		8.1.2. Valid medical aptitude certificate.	
2.3.8. The organization/unit, in the case of involvement by disaster management, accepts the directional authority of NDGDM and its regional bodies.		8.2 The organization/unit has the following team level documents:	
2.3.9. The organization/unit, in the case of involvement by disaster management, may make a media statement and release with the prior permission of NDGDM.		8.2.1. List of names of the organization/unit (with the required personal data).	
2.3.10. The organization/unit is capable of being available in the case of alert with minimum required 3 trained and suitable persons within the prescribed time.		8.2.2. Fact sheet of the organization/unit (a summarized record of the capacities and capabilities).	
3. Requirements of administration	Y/N	8.2.3. Accessibility data of the members of the organization/unit for an emergency (alert plan).	
3.1. The organization/unit has an annual training and advanced training plan.		8.2.4. A list of equipment.	
3.2. The operation of the organization/unit takes place as it is recorded in its basic documents in a lawful way.		8.2.5. Licenses of equipment.	
3.3. The organization/unit has an updated registry of personnel and assets.		8.2.6. In the case of used tools and equipment and vehicles, proofing, revision, and use licenses.	
3.4. The organization/unit keeps a log and attendance sheet at exercises, training events, and rescue operations.		In the case of deployment	
		9. Activation, mobilization	Y/N
		9.1. The rescue organization/unit is capable of arriving at the designated departure point within 3 hours after the activation (to achieve full readiness).	

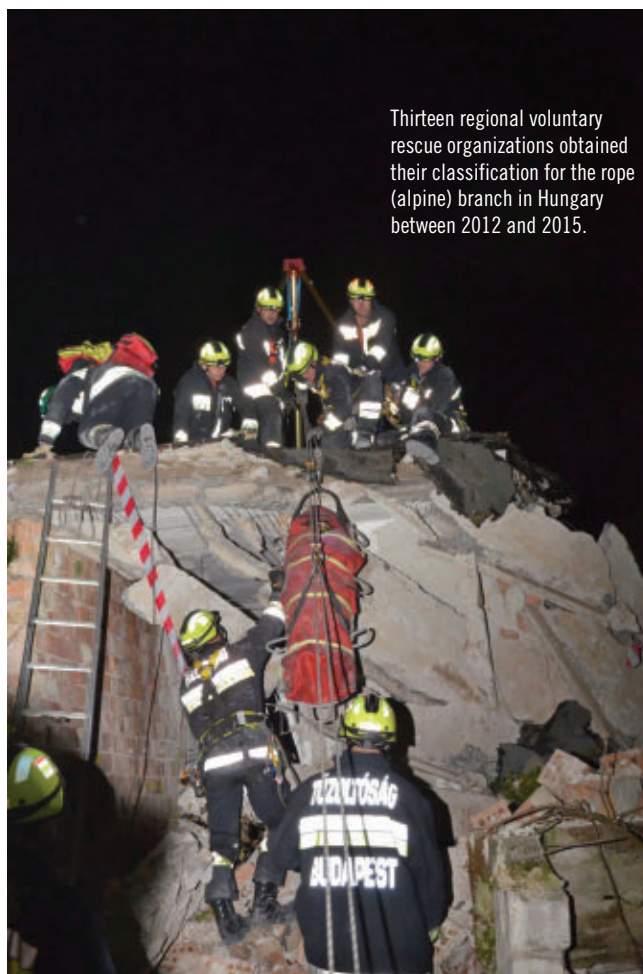
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professional approval. Procedures concerning the elaboration of the national classification system, the policy for conducting exercises, and the appointment of members of the classification committee were regulated during the classification exercise, and afterward the results were discussed in the exercise evaluation debriefings. A number of Hungarian professional umbrella organizations and nongovernmental organizations were involved in the consultations. The regulation was carried out from the bottom up, consulting with the professionals and involving active experts, striving for a professional consensus and for a

## Basic requirements ... (cont'd)

10. Search operations	Y/N
10.1. The organization/unit considers, in the case of deployment, based on the available information which search tools and equipment are to be taken along when departing for incident site.	
10.2. The organization/unit uses equipment and tools during the detection before the search operations (GPS, compass, maps, etc.).	
10.3. The organization/unit evaluates and assesses the available information in the light of on-site detection.	
10.4. The organization/unit is capable of using the technical search tools (cameras and acoustic search devices) during the location of victims.	
10.5. The rescue team carries out coordinated search operations.	
10.6. It has incident site procedures (at least in theory).	
11. Minimum required individual equipment	Y/N
11.1. Full sitting harness with chest hold, appropriate for abseiling and climbing as well, for the proper installation of abseiling and climbing tools [preferably, for French or (also known as) frog technique].	
11.2. Climbing tools with etrier.	
11.3. Self-locking abseiling (friction) camming device, breaking the rope horizontally, arrestable, fixable. The device preferably should also be suitable for backstop and a securing tool.	
11.4. 5 EA carabiners, locking, with min. 20-kN load-bearing capacity.	
11.5. Two-pronged, asymmetric bridles.	
11.6. Prussik rope, diameter 5-6 mm (2 EA).	
11.7. Helmet with "Y" strap with headlight (fixed or removable).	
11.8. 2 EA edge protector with hook-and-loop fastener.	
11.9. Carry bag for tools.	
11.10. Rope cutting knife (can be worn safely).	
12. Minimum required collective equipment	Y/N
12.1. Kernmantle rope, static, with a diameter of min. 10 mm, min. 20-kN load-bearing capacity, class A, "low-stretch," 400 m.	
12.2. Rope rings, harnesses of different lengths, 15 EA. Load-bearing capacity of rope ring: min. 12-kN and of harness: min. 15 kN.	
12.3. 30 EA carabiners, locking (if possible oval or asymmetric "D") with a min. of 20-kN load-bearing capacity.	
12.4. Climbing tools/equipment (to assemble pulling systems), min. 4 EA.	
12.5. Large-diameter pulleys with ball bearing, min. 5 EA.	
12.6. Small-diameter pulleys for pulling systems, min. 5 EA.	
12.7. Anchor bolts, self-drilling eyelet bolts, eyelets, for establishing artificial anchor points, 20 EA.	
12.8. Complete litter stretcher prerigged, capable of being pulled vertically and horizontally, with fixed pulling and holding harnesses.	
12.9. Rescue/safety triangle.	
12.10. Reserve individual equipment system.	
12.11. Additional helmet for victim.	
12.12. Medical and first-aid kit (neck fixing Sanz collar, limb fixing splints, thermos-foil).	
12.13. Carry bags for tools and instruments, easy to move in a confined space.	
12.14. 2 EA load spreaders with 30-kN load-bearing capacity.	

Thirteen regional voluntary rescue organizations obtained their classification for the rope (alpine) branch in Hungary between 2012 and 2015.



uniform and strict regulation. The above legislation regulates the procedure of national classification exercises as well as the basic professional concepts of the procedure. Its main objective is a consistent, professional, and transparent implementation of exercises prior to the national classification exercise for both the professional and voluntary rescue teams in a way that supports their daily activities and professional work.

Instruction No. 13/2013 of NDGDM regulates the schedule of exercises of the national classification system, the appointment of the members of the classification committee, and the details of the exercises. It also details that in Hungary, the National Inspector General for Civil Protection (NIGCP) of NDGDM directs the classification. He annually reviews the Organizational and Operational Guidelines describing the basic professional requirements of the national classification system and publishes the modified Organizational and Operational Guidelines on the NDGDM Web site until the end of the first quarter of each year. Until the end of the first quarter of each year, the head of the regional body submits to NIGCP the list of voluntary rescue organizations applying for national classification and the introductory professional background material on the organizations to be classified, the acceptance of which is decided by NIGCP.

Thirty days before the national classification exercise, the rescue organization prepares and submits for approval the scenario plan for the conduct of the exercise to NIGCP via the head of the regional disaster management body. Based on the exercise plan



approved by NIGCP, the newly formed voluntary rescue organization undergoes a systems integration exercise. An organization wishing to apply for reclassification participates in a test classification exercise, before the national classification exercise.

1. Test classification exercise: a command post and field exercise helping to prepare for the national classification exercise, elaborated according to the Organizational and Operational Guidelines, issued to the branches of rescue, simulating real situations.
2. Systems integration exercise: a joint field exercise, conducted with the first-time participation of the units of the newly formed rescue organization, where the units exercise cooperation.

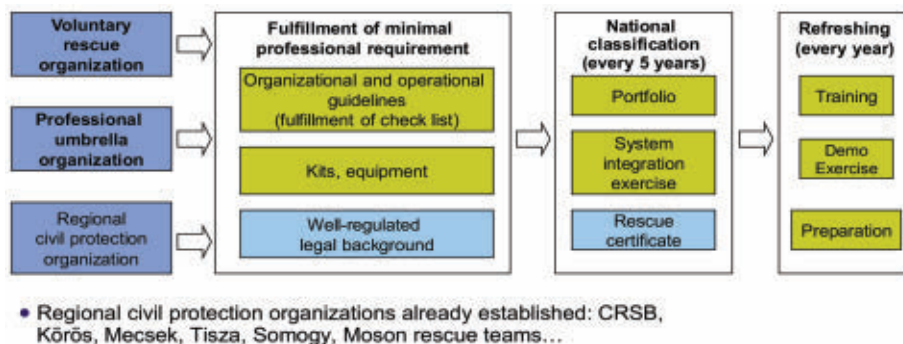
NDGDM organizes test classification exercises, systems integration exercises, and the national classification exercises in half-yearly cycles.

## EXERCISE PERFORMANCE

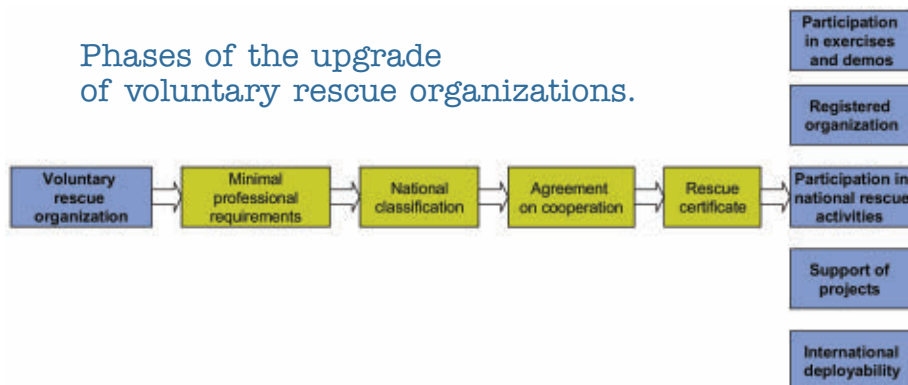
The applying rescue organization proves through a field exercise before the national classification committee its compliance with the Organizational and Operational Guidelines. The head of the regional body, organizing the classification exercise, elaborates by striving to achieve situations close to reality. The team performs the exercise selected by it according to the stipulations of the Organizational and Operational Guidelines. The exercise has to run continuously for 36 hours without interruption based on the stipulations of the national classification system. In the case of classifying several rescue organizations simultaneously, the applying organizations perform the tasks individually, defined in the basic professional requirements based on the Organizational and Operational Guidelines.

Classification exercises and the fulfillment of the Organizational and Operational Guidelines are judged by the national classification committee. NIGCP defines the number of persons on the committee; he also makes recommendation on its chairperson, members, and experts. Experts of the special scuba diving, rope (alpine) technique, canine, and other branches are to be invited to the committee every time if a voluntary rescue organization wishes to obtain classification in one of the above branches. The list of experts of the special rescue branches is published by NIGCP on the NDGDM Web site. The classification judges evaluate the exercise by validating the fulfillment of the basic professional requirements of the Organizational and Operational

## National Action Plan.



## Phases of the upgrade of voluntary rescue organizations.



## Use of voluntary rescue organizations; their involvement in rescue operations.



Guidelines according to the branch to be classified. The committee, after the completion of the exercise, makes a decision that is announced by the chairperson of the committee, who verbally evaluates the exercise. The head of the regional body organizing the classification evaluates the exercises in writing according to the evaluation criteria.

The written evaluation of the national classification exercise includes the following:

1. Management (Command).
  - a. Establishment.
  - b. Operation.
  - c. Use of the operations log.
  - d. Tasks and their fulfillment.
2. Communication.
  - a. Operability of the existing devices.
  - b. Radio traffic plan.

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3. Cooperation.
  - a. Within the team.
  - b. With other teams.
  - c. With the cooperating organizations.
4. Incident site.
  - a. Professionalism and safety of performing the tasks.
  - b. Order and efficiency of management (command and control).
  - c. Activity of the team leaders.
  - d. Situation awareness capability of the team leaders.
5. Logistics.
  - a. Transportation of the team and its equipment.
  - b. Establishing accommodation and setting up camp rules.
  - c. Route plan, march column.
  - d. Supply.
  - e. Maintenance of the equipment.
  - f. Hygiene.
6. Detection.
  - a. Professionalism (all-round coverage) and success of performing the tasks.
  - b. Exploitation of the detection equipment.
  - c. Professionalism in the use of the equipment.
  - d. Professionalism and profoundness of canine search.
7. Intervention.
  - a. Secured status of the equipment.
  - b. Professional and safe use of the tools.
  - c. Efficiency and professionalism of performing the tasks.
8. Status of medical support.
  - a. First aid (skillfulness of the personnel, professionalism of performing the tasks).
  - b. Cooperation with partner organizations.
  - c. Treatment of the injured, use of role players.
9. Summarized findings.
  - a. Experience.
  - b. Lessons learned.
  - c. Recommendations.

The classification sheets used by the committee form the attachment of the national classification diploma (certificate), a certification document issued to a classified organization entitling the given organization to participate in rescue operations. The document certifying the successful classification is authenticated by the signatures of the head of the rescue organization, the director of the regional body, and the head of the classification committee appointed by the deputy director general of NDGDM.

### NONQUALIFIED EXERCISE

At the same time, a committee member is entitled to stop the exercise in the case of improper implementation of the basic professional requirements under the Organizational and Operational Guidelines, as well as in the case of infringement of labor protection and accident prevention rules, or to request the team to repeat a task. The exercise is classified as nonqualified if as follows:

- The performance at any of the check points of the Organizational and Operational Guidelines was unsatisfactory.
- A member of the applying rescue organization, during the deployment, suffers an injury with a healing time of more than eight days.

In the case of a nonqualified classification, the exercise must be repeated within 60 days.

### MAINTAINING CLASSIFICATION

The voluntary rescue organization, having obtained the national classification, updates the acquired skills and knowledge annually in the form of training, drills, or demonstrations and maintains its preparedness. The classification should be renewed every five years by repeating the classification exercise.


The classified rescue organization concludes a cooperation agreement with the regional disaster management body, which registers the team. In the following, NDGDM issues a national classification diploma, whose validity is five years. The classification must be fully repeated every five years.

Based on all this, in Hungary, starting from October 1, 2012, only such members of voluntary rescue organizations who have the required classification for the activity to be performed by them and after concluding a cooperation agreement with the competent regional body may be involved in rescue operations and allowed to enter incident sites.

The professional criteria of the national classification system are to be published on the NDGDM Web site for the rescue organizations to be involved in the voluntary system.

### BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROPE RESCUE UNITS

The working group of special rescuers using high-angle or low-angle rescue (alpine) techniques and teams specialized for confined space (cave) rescue, all using rope technique, met at NDGDM from almost all the counties of Hungary and from Budapest to elaborate and develop the basic professional criteria for the branch. The head of the Hungarian Cave Rescue Service regarded the occasion as historic, since the leadership of the Hungarian disaster management had requested the most competent people to elaborate the very specialized professional criteria. The rescue service developed a document with titled “Basic Professional Criteria for Units to be Involved in Search Tasks in Hungary—Rope Rescue Unit,” which was considered suitable for discussion by the National Inspectorate General for Civil Protection of NDGDM and based on which it elaborated its professional criteria.

After its elaboration, 13 regional voluntary rescue organizations obtained their classification for the rope (alpine) branch in Hungary between 2012 and 2015. 

**Colonel Péter Jackovics** is a civil protection counselor, head of the Department for Emergency Management of National Directorate General for Disaster Management (NDGDM), Ministry of the Interior. He has two decades of professional experience in domestic and international disaster relief and assistance. Jackovics is the commander of HUNOR and led the governmental rescue team in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Haiti, Malta, and Serbia. He is Hungary's UNDAC expert. As deputy head of the European Union civil protection team, Jackovics directed the assistance granted by European Union countries to Japan. Under his leadership, the basic professional requirements and the national classification system for voluntary rescue organizations to be deployed in rescue operations have been elaborated in the six different branches of rescue. Jackovics is a student of the Security Science Doctorate School of the Óbuda University. His area of research is the risk mitigation of special rescue operations during disaster assistance.

